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TAGS: [TSPL](#) [MI](#)

SUBJECT: MALAWI EDUCATION SECTOR STATISTICS

[1](#)1. Summary

For the first time in many years the Government of Malawi (GOM), with support from USAID, has produced extensive data on the education sector. The data confirms that pupil-to-teacher ratios are very high, pupils-per-classroom ratios also are far above recommended norms, and that almost three-quarters of all students are beyond the normal age for their class. Encouraging findings include that most students have text books, and that through USAID and other efforts relatively few teachers remain who require basic teacher training. The report will serve as an extremely useful tool for the GOM and donors in policy and planning efforts.

[1](#)2. Background

The Ministry of Education has over the past decade struggled to provide timely, accurate and comprehensive data on its schooling system and processes. This has meant that decisions were made without any reference to meaningful data. For the first time in many years the Education Management and Information System (EMIS) section of the Ministry of Education (MOE), with the support of USAID, has produced annualized data. This is the most accurate report of its kind to date, and reflects an extremely high level of return, approximately 99% of all the questionnaires distributed. This unprecedented success was the result of the hard work of teachers and data collectors who worked tirelessly for almost eight months.

[1](#)3. Findings

The 2004 EMIS Report confirms that at the national level the Pupil Teacher Ratio (PTR) is very high (1:72), compared with a policy of recommended levels no higher than 1:60; Rural schools are poorly resourced, and have fewer teachers than in the urban areas; and urban schools are overcrowded, but also with a surplus of teachers.

[1](#)4. In detail

a) Out of the 3,166,786 primary pupils enrolled in school this year, 91.5 percent are enrolled in the rural schools. The national PTR in the rural schools stands at 1:77 against 1:44 in the urban schools. However, although the urban PTR is low, the Pupil Classroom Ratio (PCR) for the urban schools is at 1:138 against a PCR of 1:105 in rural schools. Another disturbing feature is that 62 percent of rural teachers are male, raising the issue of the lack of role models for the rural girl child.

b) Out of the total pupils enrolled, only 866,184 (27%) are of the rightful age to be in the primary system (6-13).

c) Of those enrolled in Standard one, only 55.07 percent are promoted to the next standard. In standard 8, which is the graduating class of the primary cycle, only 25.82 percent earn a completion certificate. The percentage of pupils repeating at the national level is at 19 percent. Repetition is very high at standard 1 and 3, 24.96 and 21.54 percent respectively. The effect of repetition on the system is that pupils do not finish in time for their age, and over-age pupils remain in the system and further burden a system suffering for lack of resources.

d) Quality input such as teaching and learning materials are adequately provided for. The Pupil/Textbook ratio is at 1:1 in almost all the subjects at standard 1 and 1:2 in the other classes. This means that every child has a textbook. Another positive finding is that only 21.7 percent of teachers now remain to be trained and certified.

[1](#)5. Dissemination of findings

A major challenge to be addressed is the dissemination of this report to a wide audience, and ensuring that all stakeholders understand what is happening in the

education sector. Each school in the country should receive its own profile; each District Education Office (DEO), a full report; and presentation of summaries should be provided in the form of brochures to a variety of audiences.

16. Comment

With the release of the 2004 EMIS Report, the Government of Malawi (GOM) and donors have a tool with which they can develop a variety of strategies to address the skewed education delivery system. The GOM could consider for example moving more teachers into the rural schools to reduce the PTR, though there would be immediate needs such as housing and other monetary incentives to keep them there. The GOM could also consider constructing more schools in urban areas to tackle the current problem of over-crowding and redeployment of the surplus flock of teachers. A more difficult decision will need to be made with respect to over-age pupils. The impact of much older students in lower grades is a serious one in Malawi. One approach under review would be to create alternative educational programs, including vocational training.

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